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DISCOURSE

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In the Praiſe of

Antimonie,

and the *Vertues* thereof.

Written and Publiſhed at the requeſt of a Perſon of quality.

By *Conſtantine Rhodocanacis.*

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DISCOURSE

in praiſe of

Antimony,

and the *Vertues* thereof.

ALL expert Chymiſts have ſo commended this Mineral, that amongſt all the Students of the Art, there is not one, who doth not much admire it, and not without good cauſe: For amongſt all Minerals, *Antimony* alone hath received from Nature a Body compounded, and tempered with an admirable proportion of Elements. The Elements have given it ſo great and ſecret vertues, as if they had endeavoured to rank it in the number of thoſe things, that have in them ſomething of Divinity. Seeing that this ſacred Lead hath power to make manifeſt the ſecret vertues of other Mettals: for it is a certain mild fire, that can preſerve not only the Bodies of Mettals, but even thoſe of Men. This is that fire which reſolves and penetrates the metalline Bodies. Let us hear what *Pſellus* ſaith of it to *Xiphilinus* the Patriarch, who deſired to be inſtructed of him

in some secrets of Nature. *Shall I* (saith he) *discover unto you the vertues that lie hid in the inward parts of Antimony? or the sacred Lead, which* Hippocrates *kept so secret under the name of his Tetragon?* Where we may note, that *Psellus* called this Mineral sacred, because he well knew it to be the perfection of Nature; the illustrious light, and flower of *Jupiter*: for there is in this Mineral a certain incombustible Sulphur, which useth to unite it self to other Mettals, and to purifie their impure and combustible Sulphur. Hence he is called the Governour of all Mettals; the light, and blood of Gold; because he doth not only correct the imperfect Mettals, but also upon the Test purgeth Gold it self, and exalts his light and splendour. He is called also the Star of *Mars*, because being joyned to Iron, it melts to a bright Mettalline, called the Star of Iron, and the starry *Regulus* thereof. He claims likewise to himself the name of *Mercury*, and is called the shining *Mercury*, because there is a very near affinity between these two Minerals. He is also called *Venus* and *Phosphorus*, because he brings forth two *Cupids*, armed with different Arrows, whereof some are tipped with Gold, and some with Steel, in testimony of his affection both to Gold, and to Iron; wherefore his Father *Saturn* hath adorned him as his Son, with several titles. He is called moreover the *Magnesia*, because *Antimony* hath a certain magnetical, or sympathetick property, by which he enclines to, and affects the Mettals, that he may impart to them a greater perfection: and this, much after that manner, by which the Loadstone enclines to the Pole-starre, and tends towards it perpetually. And to comprehend all in a word, *Antimony* with its magnetick quality, allures, as it were, all curious spirits to the search, and study thereof; and effects this much, that when they have once known it, they have a desire to appropriate it to themselves, and to exclude all others from the knowledge thereof. And this is the cause, why they imposed so many names upon it, and disguized this Mineral under the names of living creatures: as when they bid us, *Take the black Lyon with sparkling fiery eyes*; and *Basil Valentine* calls it a *Wolf*, whose process I will here insert, that such as can understand it, may learn thereby to make no contemptible Medicines for the health

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of man. *Take* (saith he) *the hungry ravenous Wolf, which is subject to warlike* Mars, *but originally is the son of* Saturn, *which lies in the Mountains, and Valleys, ready to dye for hunger. Cast before him the body of the King, that he may eat it, and when he hath devoured it, cast the Wolf himself into a great fire, and the Wolf will vanish away, and leave the King behind him: Do this three times, and then the Lion, or King will overcome the Wolf: and the Nature of the King delights much in the tincture of the Wolf, because of the affinity that is between the Blood of these two. In this operation, thou mayest observe a most pleasant thing, for when the Lion is glutted with the blood of the Wolf, he will shine like the Sun, and his inward vertue is very great, and very profitable for any work, thou wouldest effect therewith.* Behold now the Mineral Key, which is delivered to us, that we may not only open Metals with it, but withall, that we may open our Eyes, and may be able to discern as well the Internal Qualities, as the External of the Sacred Lead. This also is generally affirmed of *Antimony*, that it is very beneficial to colour withall: for there are drawn out of it several colours, or tinctures, not only to paint and beautifie the Eyes with, but also to stop their defluxions: yea, and to mitigate all sharp humors, and inflammations, and to take away their causes. Hence the Jewish women made use of *Antimony* for a *Cosmetic*, to paint their Eyes, and Faces withall, for they endeavoured to render themselves pleasing to the *Assyrians*, *Chaldæans*, and *Ægyptians*. In this respect the *Chaldees* called *Antimony Cohol*, and the *Arabians Cohl*, because it beautifies the face: as the *Greeks* also called it *Stibi*, from its colour: for the Women did black their Eye-brows with it, as the custom is in *Turky*, at this day. *Galen* also confesseth, that the *Greek*-women used it to the same end, and he teacheth, that it is not only proper to paint the Browes, but also to stop the defluxions of the Eyes. Whence he boasts, that he had found a most excellent remedy to repell, and drie up all sharp Rheumes that offend the Eyes, and this remedy was therefore called an *Opthalmic*, and a *Prophilactic*, or Præservative of the Eyes. This Remedy was usual amongst all those people, who lived under the Romane government, and was esteemed infallible: not only to stop defluxions, but to clear the Eyes, and to take away all spots,

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and clouds, that hindred the ſight. Hence it may appear, that *Antimony*; was uſed in the days of *Galen*, and principally by the phraſe *Upoſtimmizein* in the Greek tongue, from *Stimmi*, which ſignifies *Antimony*, becauſe they did put the *Stimmi* or *Antimony* upon their Browes, and painted them therewith. There were alſo many Phyſical Remedies made for the Eyes, of *Antimony*, whereof ſome were dry, and ſome moyſt Confections, wherewith the ſight was ſtrengthened, and ſore Eyes very readily cured. Hence it appears that *Antimony* cleanſeth our Eyes, as well as Mettals, and certainly if the effects of it are ſo wholeſome, being outwardly applyed to the Eyes, what ſhall we think of it, if it be miniſtred inwardly, and taken into the Body. Of a truth, it will no leſs ſtrengthen the ſtomack, if it be well prepared, for it cureth all diſtempers of the inward parts, ſtrengthens the appetite, and giveth eaſe in all ſtitches, and pungent diſtempers cauſed by Cholerick and Sharp-humors in the Gutts, or Stomach. *Antimony* was the *Phœnix* of *Hippocrates*, but a Wiſeman muſt extract the ſecret, and ſupply himſelf with the knowledge of the Vertues thereof, out of its Aſhes, for there they lie hid. For this Mineral doth ſo ſtrengthen, and ſtirr up nature, that ſhe can free, and diſcharge her ſelf from Bilious humors, which breed obſtructions in the Gutts, and ſtomach, and from thence diſperſe themſelves into other parts of the Body; This Mineral ſtirreth up four ſeveral faculties in our Bodies, whereby the Excrements are expelled, and all peccant humors caſt out: for it purgeth by vomit, by ſtoole, it cauſeth us to ſweat, it ſtrengthneth the principal parts, and is a preſervative againſt poyſons. Theſe admirable vertues were the cauſe, why *Hippocrates* concealed this Mineral under the name of his *Tetragon:* and verily nature hath not produced any other Compound, wherein there is ſuch vertue and power to remove, and reſolve obſtructions in the Gutts, ſeeing nature hath not imparted this faculty to any other Body, but hath conferr'd it upon *Antimony* alone. Hence *Baſil Valentine* confeſſeth this Mineral to be moſt conducing, and agreeable to the principal parts of the Body, as the very Balſam, and Mumy of life: and he affirmeth, that there is not under heaven, a more excellent medicine, than what may be prepared out of *Antimony*, for it expelleth poyſons, opens all obſtructions, driveth out the ſuperfluities of the Blood

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by ſweat, and purgeth by ſtool, and vomit; moſt juſtly therefore did *Hippocrates* call *Antimony* his *Tetragon*, becauſe of its fourfold faculties, and vertues: for it vomits, it purgeth, it ſweateth, and it preſerves, and ſtrengthens withal. *Galen* calleth thoſe ſhining filaments, or ſtreakes, which appear in *Antimony*, *Plakas*: which diſcover, and manifeſt unto us, that *Antimony* is naturally full of *Regulus*, in which *Regulus* there are excellent Vertues: For by his *Plakas Galen* uuderſtood the purer, and brighter parts of the *Antimony*, in which parts thoſe four medicinal faculties lodge, which make up the *Tetragon*. Amongſt all Symptoms of Diſeaſes, the moſt vehement is an extream pain of the head, which procedes from abundance of Bilious ſlimy humors heaped up, and impacted in the Gutts, where they cauſe Inflammations, and ſuch ſtrong Obſtructions, that ſometimes the natural paſſage downwards is ſtopped, that the very Excrements are purged out at the mouth: and in this cauſe; *Hippocrates* requires, that the patient ſhould vomit every ſixth day, ſhould drink wine, and be purged with his *Tetragon*: in which Text *Galen* hath rightly obſerved, that by his *Tetragon Hippocrates* underſtood *Antimony*. For this Mineral being well prepared, roots out the Cauſes of this Symptom, namely, the Bilious humours impacted in the Gutts. It is plain then, that *Hippocrates* by his *Tetragon*, meant *Antimony*, for this diſeaſe will not yield to any other Remedies: for purge the Patient with common Medicaments, as *Hellebore*, and the like, and make him vomit never ſo often, yet the pain in the Head ſhall ſtill continue, for thoſe remedies cannot reſolve, and expell the Bilious excrements that cauſe it, and therefore the Patient muſt be purged with the *Tetragon*, for it is the property of this Mineral to reſolve Obſtructions, and purge them out both upwards and downwards, as alſo by ſweating, and to ſtrengthen the natural parts, which have been weakned by the peccant matter. And ſeeing this Mineral is Diaphoretick withal, it doth by a gentle tranſpiration diſperſe, and expell thoſe noxious vapours and fumes, which aſcend from the Stomack, and the peccant matter, up to the heart, and the head, and cauſe thoſe troubleſome ſymptoms: and theſe excellent effects made a famous Philoſopher call *Antimony* the *Healing Mumie of life*. Others there were, who called

Antimony

Antimony the *Ramm*, and not without reaſon, for as the Coeleſtial Sun begins to be exalted in the Sign of *Aries*, even ſo the Terreſtrial Sun, namely, Gold, is exalted and purged in *Antimony*, as we may underſtand by the Ænigmatical proceſs of *Baſil Valentine*, formerly mention'd under the names of the *Lyon* and the *Wolf*. And there are thoſe who ſtick not to affirm, that in *Antimony* is hid the ſecret of all ſecrets, as being the Marcaſite of *Saturn*. But this moreover is worth our obſervation, that there are two ſorts of *Antimony*; namely, the Male and the Female: The Male is more impure, earthy, and of leſs weight; but the Female is purer, more ſparkling and bright; much heavier than the other, and hath more in her of a Mettalline nature; whence we may conclude with *Dioſcorides*, that that *Antimony* is to be choſen for the beſt, which hath in it certain ſhining filaments or ſtreaks; and which being broken, the fragments will eaſily crumble between your fingers; and which hath not much earth mingled therewith, nor any extraneous, fœculent ſuperfluities.

Moreover, there are made of *Antimony* ſeveral ſorts of Medicines, namely, the *Crocus*, or Mineral Saffron; the *Flowres*; the *Glaſs of Antimony*; the *Antimonial Cups*; the *Butter*; the *Mercurius vitæ*, or vomiting powder; the *Regulus*, the *Golden Sulphur*; the *Salt*, and *Oyl* made thereof by Reſolution in a cold place; as alſo ſeveral kinds of Tinctures. For our part, we know how to make four different Tinctures of *Antimony*, whereof the one excells the other in vertue, according to the purity of the matter, whereof they are prepared. The ſame we ſay of our ſweating powder: and theſe our Medicines cauſe no vomits at all, but work only by ſweating, and that kindly too; and without any moleſtation or offence to the ſtomack: And at *Cambridge* there are many perſons who can atteſt this truth with me, as alſo here at *London*. We prepare alſo, beſides the Tinctures, and the Diaphoretick, another Medicament, which is a ruddy powder, and we call it the *Theion* of *Hippocrates*, and our *Panodon*, becauſe it purgeth at all the Emunctories, or paſſages of the Body, by Vomit, by Stool, by Urine, by Sweat, and an inſenſible tranſpiration. We prepare alſo the Salt of *Antimony*, which hath the ſame effects with our *Theion*, this only excepted, that the Salt purgeth only downwards, by Stool

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and Urine, and in that reſpect is better than our ruddy powder for ſuch Patients, who cannot endure vomiting Medicines. Of all, and each of theſe we ſhall now diſcourſe, that ſuch perſons who deſire to have them, may know what they are good for, and how they ought to be taken, and in what quantity.

Of the uſe and Doſe of our Antimonial Tincture.

This Tincture is a good and a ſafe Medicine, and may be taken inwardly, or applyed outwardly with much benefit: for it cures the *Leproſie*, the *French Pox*, the *Scurvy*, all *Feavers*, the *Falling-Sickneſſe*, the *Dropſie*, the *Plague*, the *Meazles*, the *Itch*, and ſuch other Diſeaſes. In *Meagrims*, and pains of the head, and the *Hypocondriack* melancholy, it avails much. It expells poiſons, cures thoſe that are Aſthmatical; killeth Worms, and helps in many other diſtempers, which cannot be cured with Simples. It cleanſeth the Blood, emptieth all vicious humours of the Stomack; brings down the Courſes, and maketh Barren Women fruitful; in the *Gout* alſo, and the *Stone*, it is a commendable Medicine. The Doſe thereof is alterable, according to the age of the Patient, wherein alſo there muſt be a reſpect had to his ſtrength, and to the violence of the Diſeaſe. To little Children of 2, 3, 4, or 6 Months old, you may give one or two drops in their Mothers Milk againſt *Worms*, *Itch*, *Feavers*, *Convulſions*, *Falling-Sickneſs*, or *Meazles*; but to Children of one, two, or three years old, you may give four drops in Milk or Wine, and you may ſafely repeat this Doſe every third or fourth day. But if you would only uſe this Medicine as a Preſervative, to prevent diſeaſes, then you may give it little Children twice a Month, and it will ſtrengthen them, and prevent the ſaid diſeaſes, by cleanſing their Bodies, and purging out all bad humours. But to perſons of 15 years of age, to 24, you may give 6, or 10 drops in ſugar'd Wine. And to thoſe of 25, and ſo forwards to 50 years of age, you may give 10, 20, or 40 drops: and always you may encreaſe, or diminiſh the Doſe, ac-

cording to the age of the Patient, with reſpect had to the ſtrength of the diſeaſe, and his body. In the *Gout* and the *Stone*, give 10 drops in Wine or Ale every day, in the morning faſting: but if the Patient be very weak, give it only every third, or fourth day, and ſo continue it to the end of the Cure; but let him withall uſe a temperate dyet. In the *Leproſie*, the *French Pox*, and the *Scurvy*, take this Medicine every day in the Morning; but if the Patient be weak, then take it but every ſecond day, and that ſo long as you find it neceſſary. In the *Falling-Sickneſs* and the *Dropſie*, it is to be taken after the ſame manner. But in intermitting Feavers, take it an hour, or ſo, before the Fitt, or when the Fitt is quite over; and the Patients ſhould always in their ordinary drinks take ſome of our Spirit of Salt, in every diſtemper. But if it be a quotidian Feaver, then take the Tincture every morning. In peſtilential Diſeaſes, take a Doſe of it preſently, and repeat it every day. But if you would uſe it only for a preſervative to prevent the *Plague*, then take it but once a week. In all other inward diſtempers, you muſt take a Doſe of it in the beginning of the diſeaſe, and continue it once every day till your diſtemper be removed; and by this means all maladies may be cured, without putting the Patients to any pain. Our Diaphoretick powder is alſo effectual in all diſeaſes, wherein we have preſcribed the Tincture: and may be adminiſtred from one Grain to 40, having always a reſpect to the age, and ſtrength of the Patient. The beſt Vehicle to adminiſter it in, is *Malego* Wine; and let the Patient keep in his Bed to ſweat, as he muſt do alſo when he takes the Tincture. And always in intermitting Feavers give the Powder, as well as the Tincture, before the Fitt.

Of the Theion *of* Hippocrates.

This is a moſt excellent Medicine againſt the *Falling-Sickneſs*, *Feavers*, *Plague*, *Gout*, *Leproſie*, *French Pox*, *Pains in the Head*, *Meazles*, and *Melancholy*; and in one word, it is a commendable Medicine in all kinds of diſeaſes. In outward Maladies alſo, as old Sores and Wounds, it effects much, namely,

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if the Patient be inwardly purged with it; Women with Child only excepted, for to them it muſt not be adminiſtred, nor conveniently to any ſuch, who are ſo far ſpent, and weakened with diſeaſes, that they have not ſtrength enough left to take Phyſick. The uſual Doſe to thoſe that are not above 15 years, is from one Grain, to 3, 4, and 5. To thoſe that are of full age, and in the flower of their youth, ſuch a Doſe is to be adminiſtred, as ſhall be able to make them vomit; namely, 6, or 8 Grains; but if the Patient abhorrs a Vomit, then let him take our Salt of *Antimony*, whereof we ſhall ſpeak hereafter. To Infants, and little Children, young of age, the Doſe is from half a Grain, to one Grain. It may alſo be adminiſtred to new-born Children, againſt *Convulſions*, and *Epileptick Fitts*, but the Doſe muſt not exceed the bigneſs of the Seed of a Rape, and it muſt be given in the Mothers Milk. But if the Child be ſtrong, and above half a year old, you may encreaſe the Doſe, ſo as it may effect ſome viſible opperation, and purge out the bad humours; and by this means you may alſo prevent the *Meazles*, and many other diſeaſes which uſe to afflict Children. Of a truth, by this Medicine all Maladies wherewith men are troubled, may be eaſily cured, and at a cheap rate.

Of the Salt *of* Hippocrates.

This Salt of *Antimony* is in a manner better than the *Theion* of *Hippocrates*; and of a truth, it effects great matters, and many grievous diſeaſes are cured therewith. It avails much againſt the *Gout* and the *Stone*, and is a very deſirable Medicine for ſuch as are afflicted with them. The Doſe of it is variable: to thoſe of full age, you may give one Scruple, or a little more; to little Children, the Doſe is from one Grain, to 12, according as they are leſs, or more in years. It empties all bad humours, by a very gentle Purgation, which is worth our notice. The proper Vehicles to adminiſter it in, is Wine or Ale, or any Broth whatſoever. *Glory be to God.*

Conſtantine Rhodocanacis Chienſis.